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Equal
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Gender Equality Plans and smart-working: changes in well-being in Academia.

Annual Conference of the National Association of the Italian Universities Equal Opportunities Bodies Università del Salento, 11-12 November 2021

Smart working from emergency to opportunity

In the 2020 Conference of the National Association of Equality Bodies of Italian Universities, entitled “Smart Academia. Assessment, work, well-being and fairness in a changing university”, special attention was paid to the changes in work due to the measures to prevent and combat the COVID-19 contagion. The adoption of various forms of remote working (agile working, teleworking, smart working) induced a rapid transformation in universities, radically reorganizing a large part of research activities, teaching and technical-administrative work.

The transition from the emergency situation caused by the pandemic to a standard modality, in which remote work tends to be much more widespread than it was before the pandemic crisis, calls for an in-depth reflection in occasion of the 2021 Conference.

In fact, in the case of both the more traditional telework and the agile/smart work, many issues emerge. Following the Italian governmental attitude that led to the drafting of the “Organizational plan for agile work” (POLA), many universities have adopted their own regulations. These regulations, in many cases, constitute a starting point for reflection on the organizational, professional and working conditions which must be faced, in order to make the transition possible and fruitful. Comparison with other countries is welcome. These issues are also a priority for the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, which has set up a study group. The Conference will give special attention to these complex processes also in a comparative perspective: interested parties are invited to participate with theoretical and empirical contributions, both qualitative and quantitative (or mixed-method), including micro, meso and macro approaches.

A tentative list of the topics, considering a gender and work well-being perspective in the academia is:

1. The impact of the pandemic on the use of remote to agile work on technical-administrative, teaching and research staff and the student component
2. The role of training for both top management and staff in general
3. What are the effects on performance and how to measure them?
4. The effects on the working wellbeing and on safety of workers
5. Structural changes in organization of work and work spaces
6. Differences between agile work and telework, in the University regulations and in the actual reality of remote work
7. Investments in infrastructures and interaction with the digitalization of administrative processes

The Gender Equality Plan

Gender equality is one of the priorities for the European Research Area. In order to achieve this goal, the European Commission invites research institutions to implement institutional changes in human resources management, funding, decision-making processes and research programs through Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). GEPs should be designed to carry out impact assessments/audits of procedures and practices to identify possible gender biases; to implement innovative strategies; to correct possible biases; to set targets and monitor progress through indicators.

The implementation of GEPs in research institutions is supported by the European Commission through guidelines, dedicated funding lines and incentives. These include the rule in the Horizon Europe program, which makes a GEP as compulsory requirement for the funding of ERC successful project proposals.

Contributions are invited on the design of GEPs and their implementation in academia, in particular, but not only, on the following points:

1. Impact on the regulatory environment and organizational constraints
2. Experiences in the design and implementation of GEPs within Universities
3. How the GEP can be included within the process of changes set up by universities to achieve gender equality
4. Main actors in the process of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GEPs
5. Activation of participatory processes within academic institutions
6. Choice of actions, also with attention to persistent gender and intersectional inequalities, and territorial disparities
7. Indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of GEPs

We invite abstracts of 3,000 - 5,000 characters (including spaces). Please use the attached form and send it to counipar@gmail.com by 3 September 2021.

The proceedings of the conference will be published as part of the series “I Potenziali” of the National Association of the University Equality Bodies, published by ETS.

Acceptance of contributions will be communicated by 27 September 2021. Confirmation of participation will be required by 4 October 2021, together with a short bio of the authors.

According with the COVID-19 regulations, the conference will be held in presence and/or online. The decision on the conference mode will be taken in September 2021.

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